COMIC SHOP NEWS™

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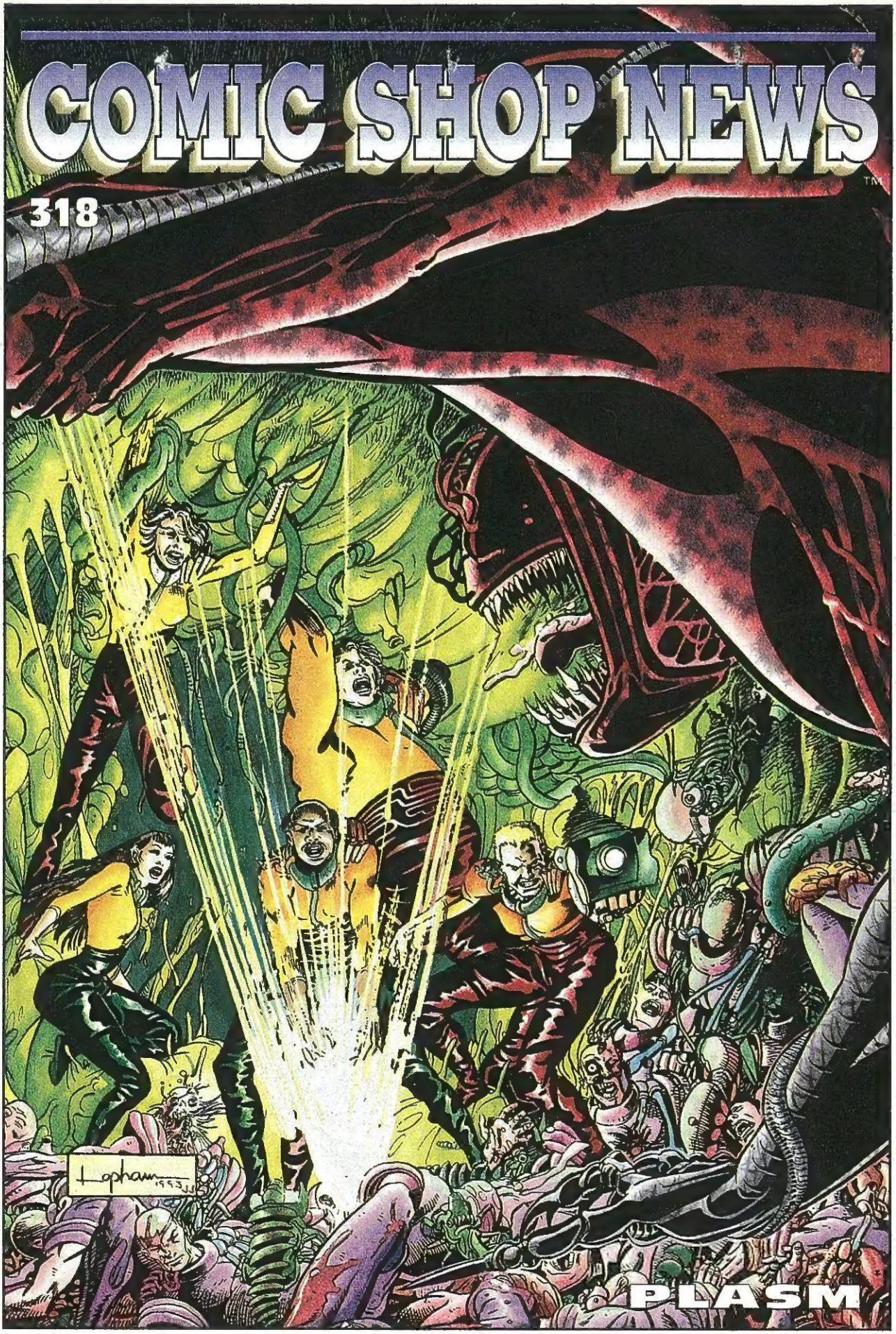

Plasm ™&©1993 Defiant Comics, ARR.

Comic Shops Go Plasm-atic in August

There's one thing Defiant Comics wants to make sure that fans know: ***Plasm #1*** *isn't* ***Plasm #0.***

In case you've forgotten, ***Plasm #0*** was the specially-designed comic that was released by the River Group as a series of trading cards. "The trading cards and binder are a licensed product," Defiant editor/publisher Jim Shooter said. "It's not really Defiant, even though we created it and it's our work." The first true Defiant comic is ***Plasm #1,*** and fans will find it on the stands in mid-August. If you haven't read the trading-card ***Plasm #0,*** don't worry; ***Plasm #1*** is designed to stand alone, offering new readers a perfectly understandable story. If you *have* read ***Plasm #0,*** however, you'll have a clearer understanding of the background of this new Defiant series written by Jim Shooter and illustrated by David Lapham.

Plasm is set in a world that exists in a dimension just a nanosecond removed from our own; in this world, everything is alive, a piece of an enormous mother organism. With life so ubiquitous, it's no surprise that very little value is placed on the individual existence. Some people feel that individual life has become too cheap—and they want to overthrow the Plasm empire and create a world that values the sanctity of each and every life. To carry out their goals, these rebels import five earthlings—and then genetically redesign them into superhumans.

Although ***Plasm*** is set in another dimension, none of the other books will be. "Everything except ***Plasm*** is real world, in fact," Shooter said. But the events in ***Plasm*** will have ties to virtually all the other Defiant Comics, offering readers an opportunity to see a comics universe develop. And when it comes to developing universes, Jim Shooter has a pretty good track record; he helped make the Valiant Universe one of the 90's biggest success stories before moving on to Defiant Comics.

Plasm #1, a $2.95 comic, is scheduled for August release.

by CLIFF BIGGERS

Galaxinovels Are Full of Stars

It's not a comic book, it's not a paperback novel... it's a Galaxinovel! But what is a Galaxinovel? Well, if publisher Dan Kritch has his way,Galaxinovels will be the next big hit in a field dominated by comic books, because these illustrated novellas offer the big name artists that comic fans love, along with novella-length superhero adventures that offer far more reading pleasure than the average comic.

"Galaxinovels are prestige-format books designed to appeal to comic book and 'traditional' readers alike," Kritch said. "Each 48-page novel is printed on quality high-gloss paper stock with perfect-bound 8pt covers. The concept is fresh and new for today's market: large quick-read text on the left, lavish full-color art on the right... Each Galaxinovel will feature exciting and dynamic super-hero adventure stories. We're launching a self-contained universe with ongoing characters and storylines. Four titles published quarterly will be released on a monthly rotation starting in August 1993."

Galaxinovels (not to be confused with the ***Galaxy Novels*** of the 1950's, which were self-contained novels published in digest format by the producers of ***Galaxy SF Magazine***) continue a tradition of illustrated fiction that is centuries old. Historically, fiction has often been accompanied by illustrations; many illustrators and fine artists (including such acclaimed talents as Dore, Rackham, Parrish, and Wyeth) have produced artwork to accompany novels, volumes of poetry, and plays. In the beginnings of the Golden Age, Big Little Books featured illustrated short stories in a small pocket-sized format. In the 1970's, Byron Preiss experimented with illustrated anthologies with his ***Weird Heroes*** series. In the past few years, comics great Jim Starlin has produced, along with Daina Graziunas, his own illustrated novels. Galaxinovels mark the first time that a publisher has introduced a new superhero universe in this illustrated-fiction format, however—and it's the first time that such a wide variety of comic book talents have been called on to produce the artwork that accompanies the text.

The Galaxinovel format debuts with ***Agent Three Zero #1***, a superhero-spy adventure written by Mark Altamont. Agent Three Zero is Deborah Valentine, the world's most dangerous superspy; she supplements her own abilities with a state-of-the-art battlesuit and a deadly arsenal of weapons. Her first adventure pits her against Voltron, a psychotic killer with his own battlesuit that produces powerful electric charges.

The second Galaxinovel, ***Virtual Reality ZONE #1,*** traps the psyche of a high-tech software developer inside his computer; it's up to three adventurers to enter the electronic computer grid and free him before his body fails.

October's Galaxinovel is ***Blackray #1***, an undersea adventure built around the Blackray, a state-of-the-art nuclear submarine. Explorer Admiral Francisco Riguetti and his piscean-human hybrid friend Aqualon lead a team of 120 adventurers as they explore the oceanic depths.

The final Galaxinovel in the initial quartet is ***Third Planet #1***, a science fiction tale that follows two teenagers whose lives are turned upside down after they are have a close encounter of the third kind. It appears that the aliens aren't the only beings pursuing Kyle and Gina; the government also wants to take them in for examination. They don't have time to answer questions, though, because they're too busy trying to stop a cosmic war from engulfing Earth.

Among the artists whose illustrations will accompany each Galaxinovel's text are Mark Bagley, William Baumann, Steve Darlington, John Estes, Art Hogge, Jeff Johnson, Kevin Maguire, Mark McKenna, Dan Panosian, Stephen Platt, Darick Robertson, Tom Smith, and Tom Tonkin.

Each $3.95 Galaxinovel will be produced in a limited run of 50,000 copies; each copy will be polybagged along with a trading card and a miniposter insert—and a thousand of the miniposters will be autographed by the artist and randomly inserted into the polybags.

by CLIFF BIGGERS

Down the Line

Look for hardcover graphic novels under the titles ***Tales To Astonish, Tales of Suspense,*** and ***Strange Tales*** next year; the books will feature new stories starring the heroes who originally appeared in those early Silver Age split-books... *John Byrne* is already working on a ***Next Men*** miniseries spin-off for late '93 release ... Look for a line of licensed rock-related comics from Malibu; the ***Rock-It*** series will include books about *Metallica, Lita Ford,* and *Ozzy Osborne*... Millennium Comics has a ***Dracula*** adaptation in the works... *George Perez* has agreed to illustrate the bookend beginning-and-ending volumes of a major Malibu Ultraverse crossover... Look for a ***Vigilante*** series in early '94—starring the Western Vigilante, not the urban hero... *Steve Englehart* and *Michael Golden* are the initial creative duo for the new ***Raptor*** series—a spinoff of ***Jurassic Park***; other artists will illustrate later story arcs... Hallelujah! *Frank Miller* is in the preliminary stages of a ***Sin City II*** series!... Comic Images has some all-chromium Conan cards coming out later this year... Gaming fans will soon be able to play a superhero RPG featuring Malibu and Image heroes, among others...

COMIC SHOP NEWS™
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From Your Friendly Neighborhood Comics Outlet
Printed on 100% Recycled Newsprint

This Drug Is the Bane of Batman's Life

When readers were first introduced to the drug known as Venom in the pages of ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #s 16-20,*** no one suspected that the drug would have major ramifications in Batman's later life. This drug, which enhances the user's natural abilities, had dangerous side effects for Batman... and for Bane, the villain who was created through experimentation with the drug. In light of Bane's becoming—shall we say?— the backbone of the current "Knightfall" storyline, DC is reprinting that five-part story arc in a new trade paperback entitled ***Batman: Venom***. There won't be any symbiotic black-clad, gape-mouthed, tongue-waving adversaries in here—but as it turns out, something equally dangerous lurks in the book's pages. ***Batman: Venom***, a $9.95 trade paperback written by *Dennis O'Neil* and illustrated by *Trevor Von Eeden, Russell Braun,* and *Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez,* is scheduled for August 19th release.

It's No Illusion Blackmore's Adding Color

Blackmore Publishing entered the field by producing black and white comics such as ***Gareth Blackmore's Unusual Tales,*** but later this summer, the company is venturing into the world of color comics with a new title, ***Factual Illusion***, that spins off from their flagship title. The story, which features a conflict between a high-tech world of virtual reality and the macabre world of the supernatural, began in the pages of ***Gareth Blackmore's Unusual Tales,*** where it appeared in black-and-white; when ***Factual Illusion*** graduates to its own title, though, the first chapter will be reprinted with added color. The series is written by *Dan DeBono* and illustrated by *Kyle Hotz* and *Pat Kovacic.*

According to DeBono, Blackmore "wants to give fans a high-quality alternative to the ever-growing stable of superhero titles out there. I think there is room for quite a few well-done action-adventure type comics, and we want to be among the companies supplying them." ***Factual Illusion #1***, a 32-page no-ads $3.95 comic, is scheduled for September release.

Independent Claws

Wolverine, who has always had a pretty active superhero life outside of the X-Men, just may be taking on a little too much outside action in the new limited series ***Damaging Evidence.*** In this three-issue series by *Carl Potts* and *Gary Erskine,* Logan decides that the Punisher has gone too far... and it's up to him to bring him in before his actions result in the death of even more innocents. ***Wolverine/Punisher: Damaging Evidence*** also features the return of Punisher villains Sniper and Damage. ***Damaging Evidence #1***, a $2 comic, is scheduled for August 19th release.

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New Hardware or An Upgrade?

Is Hardware an all-new high-tech hero, or is he just the latest version of a high-tech hero who took on SYSTEM? Curt had always assumed that he was the first—but when a rogue SYSTEM agent gives him more information on the secret organization, he discovers that there may have been another high-tech vigilante before him! Learn more about it on August 19th in ***Hardware #8,*** written by *Dwayne McDuffie* and illustrated by *Denys Cowan and Mike Manley.*

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Of Rodents and the Red Planet

What do you get when you take three motorcycle-riding mice from Mars, transplant them to Earth, and pit them against extraterrestrial ecological terrorists? Well, Marvel Comics and Marvel Productions hope that you get a hit comic book and a hit syndicated animated series. ***Biker Mice From Mars*** is debuting in both comic and cartoon form this fall; the book pits the Biker Mice against such villains as Dr. Karbunkle, Grease Pit, Limburger, and the X-Terminator. The first three issues, written by animated series creators *Rich Ungar* and *Robert Forward* and illustrated by *Rurik Tyler*, present the origin of the Biker Mice and their battle with the Plutarkians. ***Biker Mice From Mars #1***, a $1.50 comic, is scheduled for September 9th release.

Saga Genesis

Thus far, ***Dinosaurs For Hire, Ex-Mutants,*** and ***Protectors*** have, for the most part, operated within their own distinctive worlds; oh, there has been the occasional crossover, but it's had very little impact on the status quo in any of the books. That's all about to change, though, with the debut of **Genesis,** a multi-part crossover saga that will take place in all three of the aforementioned books.

Genesis begins in ***Ex-Mutants #11***; this issue will chronicle the death of an Ex-Mutant. Sluggtown is invaded by the alien conqueror Extreme, who proves to be more than a match for the Sluggtown's non-mutant defenders. ***Ex-Mutants #11***, a $2.25 comic, is written by *Roland Mann* and illustrated by *Thomas Derenick* and *Mike Miller.* This issue will feature a backup story by *Brian Murray.*

From there, the story continues into ***Dinosaurs For Hire #8,*** written by *Tom Mason* and illustrated by *Leonard Kirk* and *Bruce McCorkindale.* In this installment, the Dinosaurs journey to Graveworld, only to discover that they are there by mistake and must fight their way back to their own dimension. This $2.50 comic also features a backup story by *Jeff Johnson* and a cover by *Joe Staton.*

Protectors #13 brings Extreme to Los Angeles, where Eternal Man and the Ferret do their best to stop his attempted conquest of the city. *R.A. Jones, Thomas Derenick,* and *Mike Miller* handle the creative honors for this installment of the Genesis storyline. This book will feature a special backup story by *Steve Erwin.*

Three other September-release titles—***The Ferret #5, Gravestone #3,*** and ***Man of War #6***—are Genesis tie-in titles, relating to the primary storyline without actually being numbered chapters.

Malibu is also offering a special $3.50 ***Genesis #0*** enhancement comic that fits in to the Genesis storyline. This premium book kicks off with a wraparound holographic foil cover by fan-favorite *George Perez;* inside, it contains new stories starring the Ex-Mutants, Dinosaurs for Hire, Protectors, and a new character, WidowMaker, whose own series will debut in November. This special issue will feature artwork by such well-known illustrators as *Curt Swan, Rich Buckler,* and *Jimmy Palmiotti,* as well as newcomer *Patrick Rolo.*

The **Genesis** storyline will continue through the fall, bringing all three of these popular series into the same universe. Each installment of this storyline will feature a special **Genesis** logo to make it stand out on the comic shop racks; look for the first installment in early September.

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Editorial Office:
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Marietta, GA 30066
fax (404) 973-6949
Business Office:
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Cliff Biggers
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Publisher
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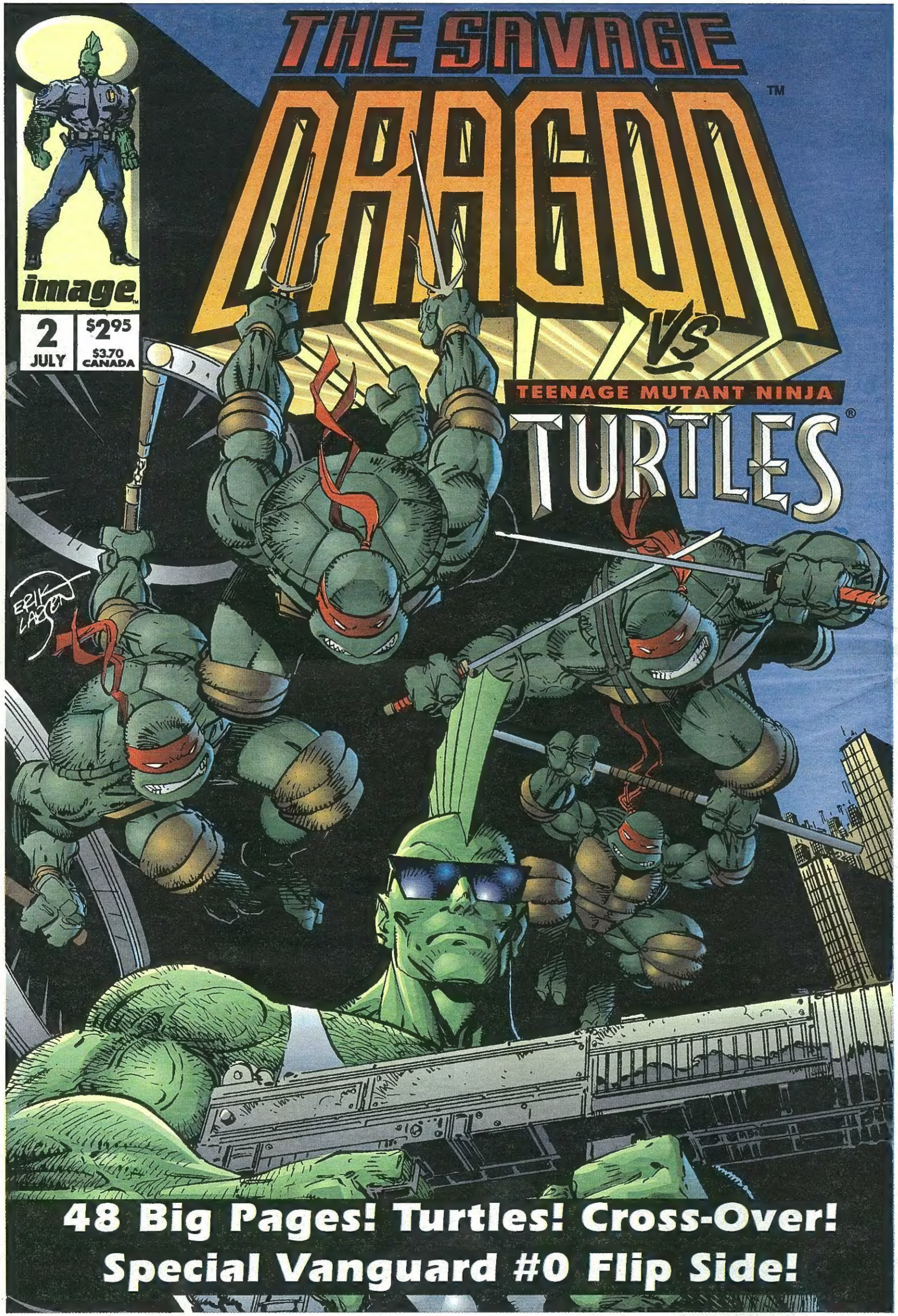
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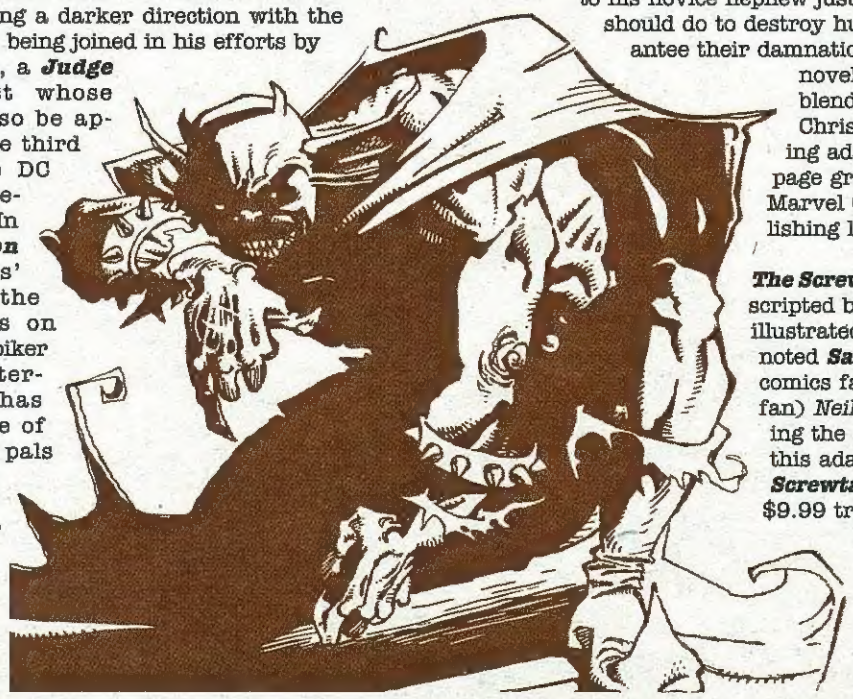
A More Spirited Demon

Recently, the Demon has been a rather likeable, albeit a bit curmudgeonly, character—but that's changing under new writer *Garth Ennis*. Ennis, who has also written the rather dark adventures of John Constantine in ***Hellblazer,*** is taking a darker direction with the title—and he's being joined in his efforts by *John McCrea*, a ***Judge Dredd*** artist whose work will also be appearing in the third issue of the DC hardboiled series ***Streets.*** In ***The Demon #40***, Ennis' first issue, the Demon takes on black-leather biker Johnny Basterson, who has called up one of Etrigan's old pals to desecrate some holy ground. ***The Demon #40***, a $1.75 comic, is scheduled for August 26th release.



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Who's C.S. Lewis? Why, That's Narnia Business!

If the name *C.S. Lewis* doesn't ring any bells with you, then you've missed out on some of the most ambitious fantasy of the 20th Century. Lewis' Narnia Chronicles, a grand allegorical fantasy with religious overtones, stands on a par with *Tolkien's* Lord of the Rings trilogy. These books weren't Lewis' only fantastic efforts, though; he also wrote a wonderful epistolary book, ***The Screwtape Letters,*** that collects the letters of Archdemon Screwtape, who explains to his novice nephew just what a demon should do to destroy humanity and guarantee their damnation. This powerful novel, a wonderful blend of fantasy and Christian ethics, is being adapted into a 96-page graphic novel that Marvel Comics will be publishing later this summer.

The Screwtape Letters is scripted by *Charles Hall* and illustrated by *Pat Redding*; noted ***Sandman*** author, comics fantasist (and Lewis fan) *Neil Gaiman* is supplying the introduction for this adaptation. ***The Screwtape Letters,*** a $9.99 trade paperback published by Marvel Comics lin conjunction with Thomas Nelson Publishers, is scheduled for August 5th release.

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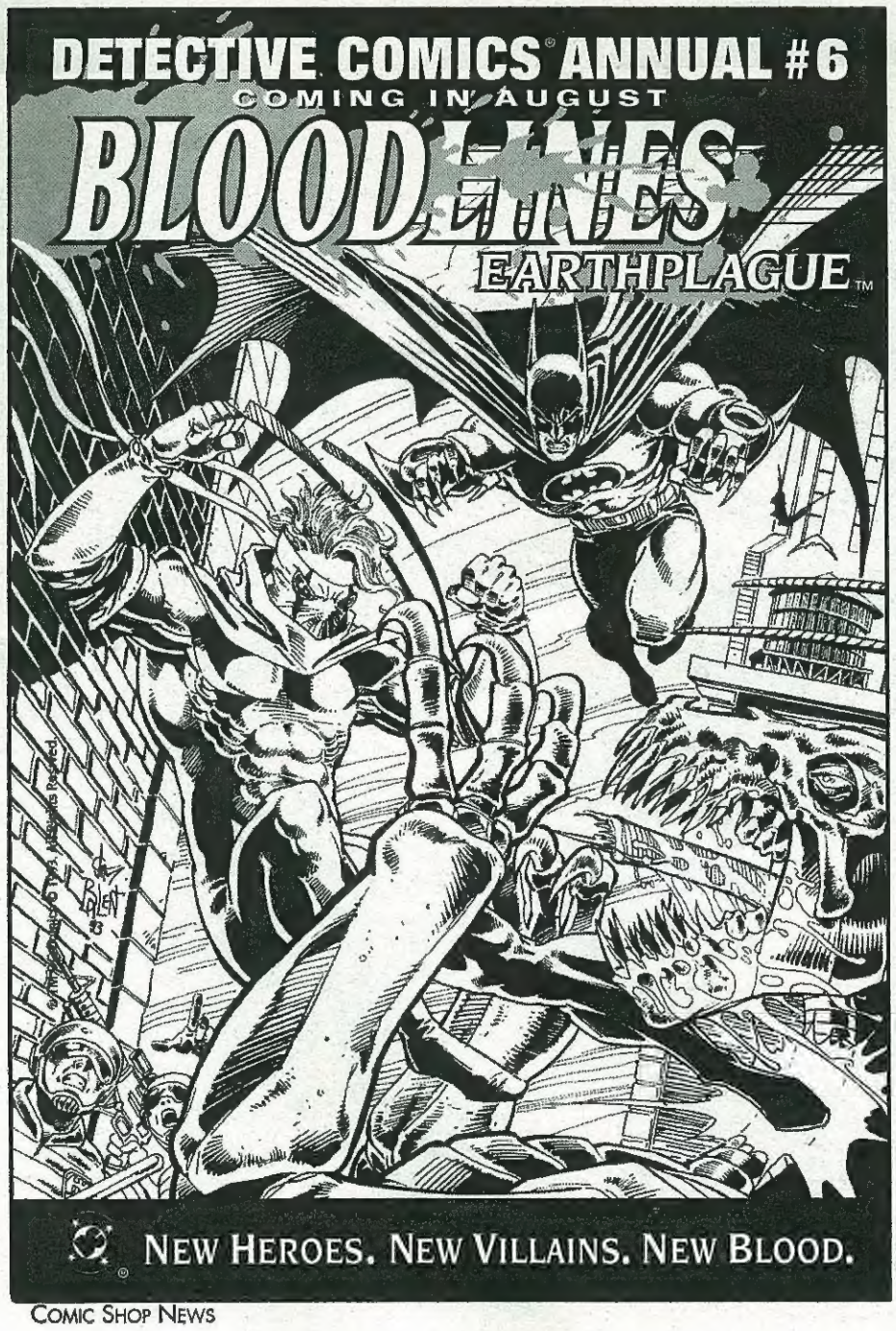
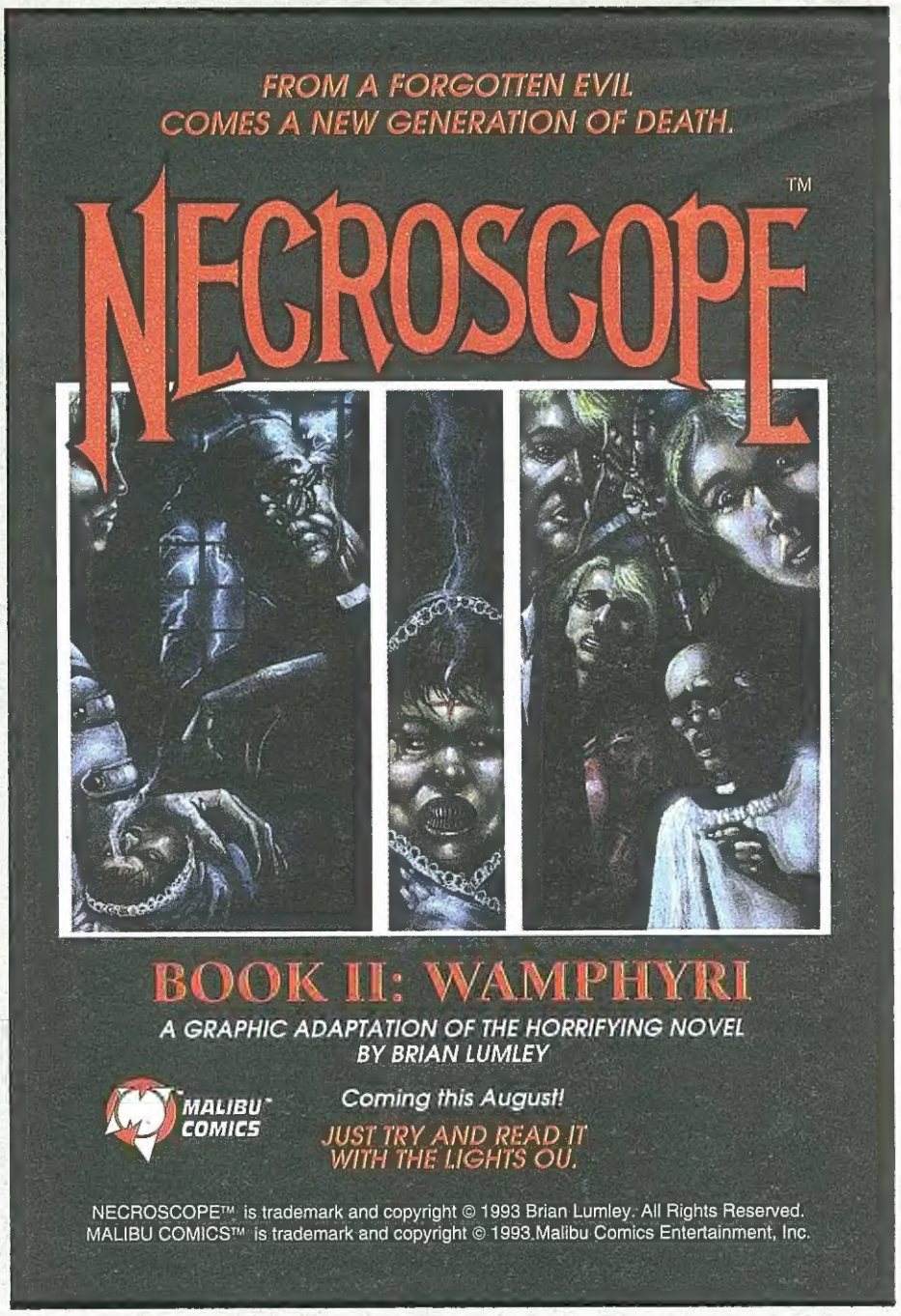
Big Finish

It's a tale that kept growing in the telling, it seems: *Katsuhiro Otomo*'s dramatic conclusion to his ***Akira*** series, previously announced as a whopping 88-page comic, has expanded again! The new pagecount is 96, making it twice as long as an average issue of ***Akira.*** This big finish reveals what happens after Neo-Tokyo explodes; you can be there on August 26th to find out who survives and who doesn't. As always, ***Akira #37*** is suggested for mature readers—and it's strongly suggested for anyone who enjoyed the animated version of Akira and wants to see how everything wraps up. ***Akira #37*** is priced at $8.95.

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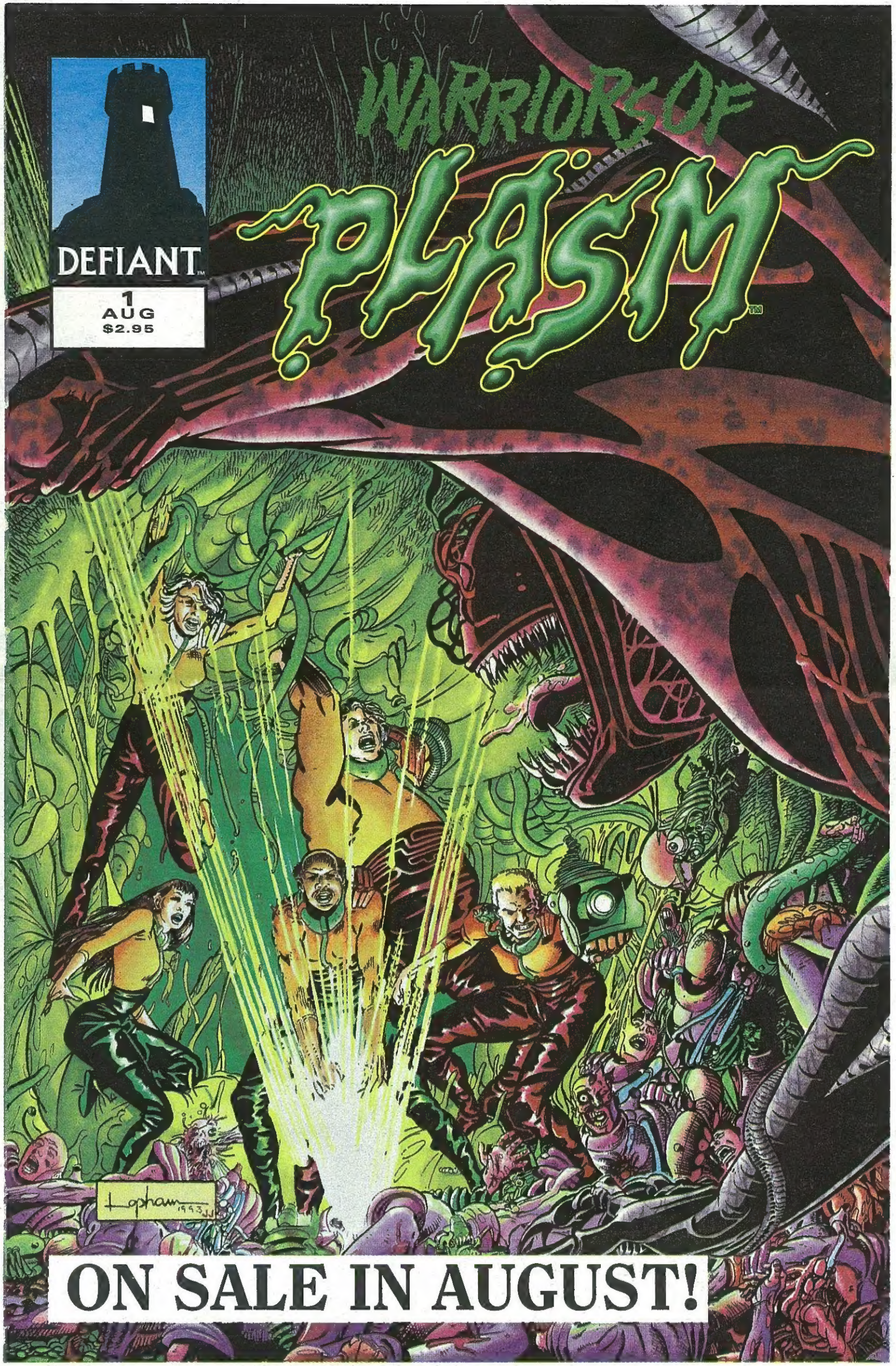
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Richard Howell

by Cliff Biggers

Richard Howell is best known to comic book fans as an artist (among other things, he illustrated DC's Hawkman miniseries in the mid-80's)—but he's also paid his dues as an editor, having helped Harris Comics launch its horror line with Creepy and Vampirella last year. Howell left Harris in late '92, moving on to a new venture, Claypool Comics, where he is developing a series of horror-adventure titles, as well as writing and illustrating one of the books. Recently, Howell took time away from his triple-threat duties to talk to CSN about the Claypool line—both what it is and what it isn't!...

How did Claypool end up moving into the horror field?

We moved into horror adventure largely because of that mythical "licensed property" Ed Via wanted to license; Ed approached me to see if I would be interested in packaging something like the current Claypool line when we got the licensed property—which we did *not* get, by the way. We were all pretty excited about putting this stuff together; I was working at Harris at the time, overseeing ***Creepy*** and Vampirella. For various reasons, it seemed like it would be a good idea to pursue this, regardless.

I came up with a proposal regarding the interlocking series set in the same town. Ed's reservation was that he didn't want this to turn into one of those summer-annual storylines where the reader is forced to buy everything to have any idea what's going on. I'm obviously *way* past the age where I get excited about that stuff; in fact, I think the law of diminishing returns has applied to those crossover storylines for a while now. We were committed to trying to make each issue enjoyable in its own terms; crossovers were the icing on the cake, not the whole point of the series. The first round of books make it obvious that they're all very different, and some readers might like one more than the others. They don't have to read every one to understand the stories.

You debuted the Claypool line with a licensed book, Elvira; does it tie in with the Fear city storyline?

Elvira, is highly tangentially tired in with the ***Fear City*** series. Some supporting characters seen in some of the ***Fear City*** books show up for the first time in ***Elvira;*** one of the kids in ***Deadbeats*** is a big Elvira fan. That's about the only tie in there is, though.

There are two stories in each issue of ***Elvira,*** a lead story and a backup. I'm trying hard to have at least one of those two stories be complete in each issue. Right now we have a six-part serialized back up; the lead stories in the first six issues are self-contained adventures. When we have the lead stories continued in upcoming issues, then an attempt will be made to have the backups self-contained; we want the fans to have something complete in every issue

Who's working on the book?

We're doing photo covers on the book; the interior staffers include Kurt Busiek, Paul Dini, Jo Duffy, Dan Spiegle, Neil Vokes, Louis LaChance, Dave Cockrum, Mike Manley, Tom Simonton—a new artist whose work is very well suited to this type of material—Fred Hembeck is writing a story, Frank Strom is doing a two-parter, and Colleen Doran is drawing a few stories, and Terry Austin is inking one of those.

Everyone has licensed-property horror stories; has Elvira been easier than most licensed books?

It's been pretty smooth, actually. We've had some discussions with the licensing people, but we don't have to go through the 767th person on the totem pole every time we call; I'm dealing with Elvira's personal manager, who's one step removed from Elvira herself—and she looks over as much of the stuff as she wants to. We've had occasional discussions about the art, and when Elvira thinks things haven't been close enough, they've been touched up; we've had a discussion as to whether some sentence was too grammatically precise for an Elvira quip, and she was right, so we changed that. There haven't been any problems, though.

Who's working on the other Claypool titles?

Phantom of Fear City is written by Steve Englehart all the way through. Issues one, two, and four were drawn by Matt Haley; Matt is

very promising and is bound to have a very good career in comics, but he eventually took himself off the series because he wasn't fast enough. It took him many months to do one issue; we were losing so much time per issue that we had to bring in others to keep the book on schedule. We experimented with having Mark Miraglia draw issue three; he didn't feel comfortable with the subject matter. As of issue five, our new regular penciller is Nick Choles; he did a ***Man From UNCLE* and a *Doc Savage*** story for Millennium. He's a pal of John Nyberg, our regular inker; Nick sent me some samples and they were very good. He's contracted for several more issues.

Soulsearchers is co-plotted by Peter David and me; Peter is scripting it. The art is by Amanda Conner and Jim Mooney. I think Peter is having a lot of fun on this book; Amanda is turning out 150% effort on every page. No matter how simple the stuff we ask her to draw, she fills up the back of panels with all sorts of things. I think the matchup of Amanda and Jim Mooney is terrific; Jim has been underestimated because of very bad matchups with the wrong pencillers, or because of bad deadlines. It's very obvious from the quality of his work on this collaboration that, if you give him a penciller with a good individual zing to his or her work and some clear editorial instructions, he'll turn out a job that's about as good as anything in comics nowadays. Originally, Amanda went up to Marvel, where they put her on ***Barbie; Barbie*** has some very specific restrictions artistically, though—for instance, I don't think Barbie has more than one expression—so she didn't get to do what she wanted to do.

It seems that ***Soulsearchers*** was—without anybody realizing it—created to show off her skills. This is *not* comic book in-joke humor; These are funny superhero adventure stories featuring supernatural opposition. There's some sort of conflict, and it usually has a supernatural end, but it's very much an adventure book.

Deadbeats is our vampire soap opera; written and pencilled by me and inked by by Ricardo Villagran. It's a continuing storyline that should come to a resolution of sorts by issue twelve; considering it won't matter much whose alive and who's undead, I'm sure more mileage could be gotten out of it, though. There's going to be a lot of changing sides throughout the twelve issues.

Deadbeats is easily the most violent book we're doing; issue one begins with four graphically presented vampire murders. There's some breathing room while we introduce the other characters, then there are other vampire attacks in the middle. It's action and supernatural horror with a very strong base of human interest.

Whenever you mention "a vampire soap opera," comparisons to Dark Shadows are inevitable...

I think ***Dark Shadows*** is about as emblematic as you'll get in that field, so I'm very familiar with the various ways that ***Dark Shadows*** handled a lot of the same subject matter. Considering that we have about the same budget they did, we do have some similarities... there's even an affectionate nod towards ***Dark Shadows*** here and there. The introduction of the woman doctor in ***Deadbeats*** is a nod to the way Dr. Hoffman was introduced in ***Dark Shadows***, where no one knows she's a woman until she shows up on the doorsteps and they say, "You're Dr. Hoffman?!"

Describe the Fear City premise.

There is a small town on the Connecticut coastline called Mystic Grove; for reasons no one is too clear of initially, it has lately become the focus of supernatural activity. In ***The Phantom of Fear City***, the ghost returns to Mystic Grove—which, as we find out, he has done every seven years since his ship crashed off the coast in 1664; he's been cursed to do this every seven years until he can win the love of a woman, and this is his quest. As he appears every seven years, some other supernatural activity always follows in this wake, but this time it's stronger than ever. This is the focus of the shift that's caused the supernatural stuff to get stronger—and leads to the other books.

Other supernatural happenings include a Demon who has been summoned up from Arabic hell; he becomes one of a rather second-rate group of supernatural adventurers founded by a con man. Things change very fast, though, and they end up becoming about as legit as you can get. There are other thing that come up that make them very in demand. That's ***Soulsearchers and Co.***

At about the same time, four vampires come to town. They find a young runaway and make him into one of them; gradually, they make him their new leader. They're ***The Deadbeats,*** and they too have a reason for being in Mystic Grove—a sinister agenda, as they say.

The books come out every six weeks, on a staggered basis. These books all take place in the same town. There's nothing so crucial in any one of them that forces readers to buy them all—but if they do, they'll get a better overview of the town happenings. The town has the same mayor, the same sheriff, the same television station staff, etc., from book to book—but these stories aren't tightly interconnected. There's no chance that anyone will throw down ***Soulsearchers*** and say, "Dammit, I'll have to buy ***Deadbeats*** to figure out what's going on."

You're obviously not a fan of crossovers.

I don't think any of the crossover stories have their genesis on the creative end. When editorial people have their meetings, I don't think they say, "I have this story that's so big that I need all of this summer's annuals to tell it." I think someone says, "We need a story that'll run through all of our summer annuals; anyone have any ideas about what we could do?"

It has to be hard introducing a new company this year, with so many high-profile debuts, new universes, and so on.

It is, there's no doubt about it. There are so many things that I've been hearing about what Claypool is up to that I don't know how they get started; another one of my jobs is trying to run around and correct people—sort of rumor control. For example, Claypool is *not* an imprint of Eclipse; all of our books are not miniseries. The only book that has an actual cut-off so far is ***Phantom of Fear City,*** which is scheduled to run twelve issues and conclude. As to whether or not there is room for some of the characters to return in other adventures—I'll tell you after I see the script for issue twelve. Steve sort of goes with the moment; he's had so much fun writing issues one through eleven that he doesn't want to write number twelve for a while, because that may be the last time we see the characters. Steve's doing a great job for us; I think Steve is a very strong writer who occasionally gets faulty editorial direction; I think his ***Phantom of Fear City*** stuff is really very, very strong. For people who liked Steve's work in the 70's but haven't been following it since then, they'll find a lot in ***Phantom*** that reminds them of a lot of his 70's work.

The current comics glut is definitely a problem, though—there's no debate there. There are a couple of ways we're dealing with that; one is that we're attempting to forge an identity for Claypool Comics that's based on enjoyment

CSN CHARTS

TOP 50 COMICS

CSN's Top Seller charts are based on figures supplied by the two major distributors, Diamond Distribution and Capital City Distribution, as well as figures by a cross-section of comics speciality shops. The distributor's figures represent retailer orders placed on the titles, while the information from stores represents copies sold.

1.Deathmate Prologue
2. X-Factor 92
3. Spawn 11
4. Shadowhawk II 2: The Secret Revealed
5. Sabretooth 1
6. Savage Dragon 1
7. X-O Manowar 0
8. Batman 498
9.Cyberforce 3
10. Uncanny X-Men 303
11. Deadpool 1
12. Secret Weapons 1
13. X-Force 24
14. X-Men 22
15. Detective Comics 665
16. Venom: Funeral Pyre 1
17. Supreme 3
18. Maxx 3
19. Adventures of Superman 502
20. Action Comics 689
21. Superman 80
22. Superman: Man of Steel 24
23. Amazing Spider-Man 380
24. Spider-Man Unlimited 2
25. Showcase '93 7
26. Showcase '93 8
27. Spider-Man 37
28. Batman 497 2nd Printing
29. Cable 3
30. Wolverine 71
31. Turok: Dinosaur Hunter 3
32. Web of Spider-Man 103
33. Solar, Man of the Atom 25
34. Spectacular Spider-Man 203
35. Prime 1
36. Arcadia Week One: X
37. Spider-Man 2099 10
38 .Bloodshot 8
39. Hardcase 1
40. Strangers 1
41. Arcadia Week Three: Ghost
42. Batman/Grendel 1
43. Night Thrasher 1
454 Arcadia Week Two: Pit Bulls
45. HARD Corps 10
46. Infinity Crusade 3
47. Trencher 2
48. Archer & Armstrong 14
49 1963 3
50. New Titans 100

TOP DOLLAR COMICS

The following comics, graphic novels and trade paperbacks were given Top Dollar ratings based on the dollar volume of the copies sold (or are expected to sell) during the late July and August sales period.

1. Deathmate Prologue
2. X-Factor 92
3. X-O Manowar 0
4. Sabretooth 1
5. Spawn 11
6. Shadowhawk II 2: The Secret Revealed
7. Venom: Funeral Pyre 1
8. Savage Dragon 1
9. Batman/Grendel 1
10. Deadpool 1
11. Secret Weapons 1
12. Cyberforce 3
13. Spider-Man Unlimited 2
14. Supreme 3
15. Maxx 3
16. Batman 498
17. Showcase '93 7
18. Showcase '93 8
19. Uncanny X-Men 303
20. Spider-Man 37
21. Turok: Dinosaur Hunter 3
22. Cable 3
23. X-Force 24
24. X-Men 22
25. Adventures of Superman 502
26. Action Comics 689
27. Superman 80
28. Superman: Man of Steel 24
29. Wolverine 71
30. Detective Comics 665
31. Solar, Man of the Atom 25
32. Night Thrasher 1
33. Bloodshot 8
34. Amazing Spider-Man 380
35. New Titans 100
36. Infinity Crusade 3
37. Prime 1
38. HARD Corps 10
39.Hardcase 1
40. Batman 497 2nd Printing
41. Hardcase 1
42. Strangers 1
43. Archer & Armstrong 14
43. Harbinger 21
44. Jurassic Park 1
45. Trencher 2
46. 1963 3
47. DC Universe: Trinity 1
48. Web of Spider-Man 103
49. Spectacular Spider-Man 203
50. X-O Manowar 20

TOP 10 BLACK & WHITE COMICS

1. Cerebus 0
2. Cerebus 171
3. Maison Ikkoku 1
4. Savage Sword of Conan 212
5. Dirty Pair: Sim Hell 2
6. Dark Horse Presents 74
7. Ranma 1/2 Part 2 6
8. Phantom of Fear City 1
9. Macross II 10
10. Robotech II: Return to Macross 3

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TOP TEN NON-COMICS

The Top Ten Non-Comics is based on number and not dollar value. This category includes graphic novels, hardcovers, trade paperbacks, portfolios, etc. It includes books that actually were on sale during the July sales period.

1. Marvel Universe Series IV Trading Cards
2. Plasm Zero Issue Trading Cards
3. WildCATs Trade Paperback
4. Hero Illustrated 1
5. Wizard 24
6. Comic Values Monthly 83
7. X-O Manowar Trade Paperback
8. Deatwatch 2000 Trading Cards
9. James Bond Trading Cards
10. Spider-Man: Hobgoblin TPB

INFINITY CRUSADE CROSSOVERS

THE NEVER-ENDING BATTLE CONTINUES IN THIS WEEK'S INFINITY CRUSADE CROSSOVER TITLES!

SILVER SURFER #84
THOR #466

AVENGERS: TERMINATRIX OBJECTIVE #1 (of 4)

TIMELY TAKEOVER!

THUNDERSTRIKE, WAR MACHINE, AND U.S.AGENT STAR IN THIS SEQUEL TO "CITIZEN KANG". TERMINATRIX ATTEMPTS TO EXPAND KANG'S MILLENNIUM-SPANNING CHRONOPOLIS TO HORRIFIC PROPORTIONS, AND THE AVENGERS WILL DO ANYTHING TO STOP HER! THIS ISSUE ALSO BOASTS A HOLO-GRAFIX STARFIELD FOIL COVER THAT'S WAY AHEAD OF ITS TIME! BY GRUENWALD AND GUSTOVICH

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HOKUM & HEX

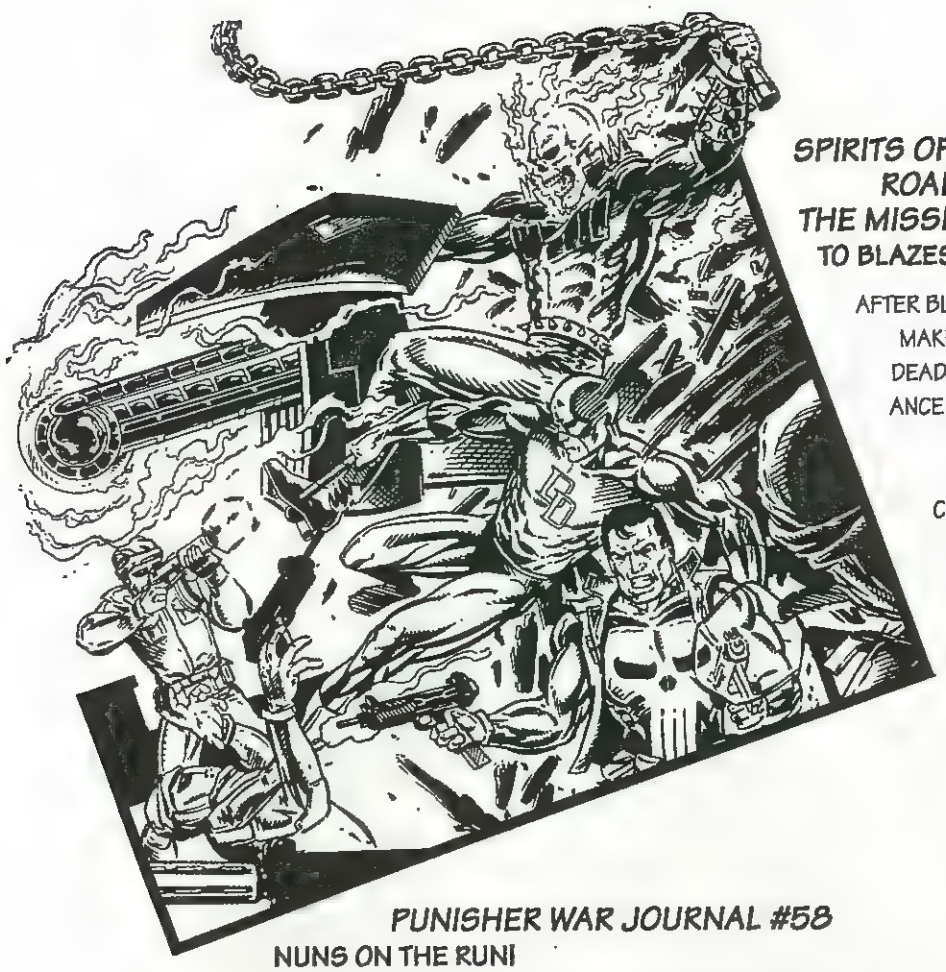
EARTH'S WORST STAND UP COMEDIAN IS EARTH'S BEST HOPE AGAINST MYSTIC EVIL. NO JOKE.

CLIVE BARKER'S RAZORLINE PREMIERE CONTINUES AS A FLOUNDERING NIGHT CLUB COMEDIAN HAS TO CUT OFF, NOT CUT UP, INVADING FORCES. BY FRANK LOVECE, ANTHONY WILLIAMS AND ANDY LANNING. SPECIAL PRISMATIC FOIL COVER!

GHOST RIDER ANNUAL #1

KNIGHTS OF TERROR!!!

AT LONG LAST, THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE RIDES INTO THE PAGES OF HIS VERY OWN ANNUAL! BUT IT'S NO JOY RIDE AS GHOSTIE MUST FACE THE MENACE OF A LETHAL NEW VAMPIRIC VILLAIN, NIGHT TERROR! COMES POLYBAGGED WITH A NIGHT TERROR "ROOKIE" TRADING CARD. BY MACKIE, BACHALO (DEATH), AND BUCKINGHAM



SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #14
ROAD TO VENGEANCE: THE MISSING LINK - PART 2.
TO BLAZES WITH EVERYTHING!

AFTER BLAZE GETS A PERMANENT MAKE OVER COURTESY OF THE DEADLY SKINNER, HIS APPEARANCE AND POWERS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME! ALSO, THE SEARCH FOR THE SOUL CRYSTAL, GHOST RIDER VS. CENTURIOUS, AND THE FORMING OF AN EVIL ALLIANCE BETWEEN CENTURIOUS AND LILITH! DID WE MENTION A NEON INK COVER, TOO? BY MACKIE, MANLEY, AND PALMER

PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #58
NUNS ON THE RUN!

GHOST RIDER! DAREDEVIL! PUNISHER! A PSYCHOTIC NUN-KILLER ON THE LOOSE! THE GOOD GUYS MIGHT JUST WIN...IF THEY DON'T RIP EACH OTHER TO PIECES FIRST! BY DIXON AND KWAPISZ

MIGHTY MARVEL FAN PHONE (516)352-1212

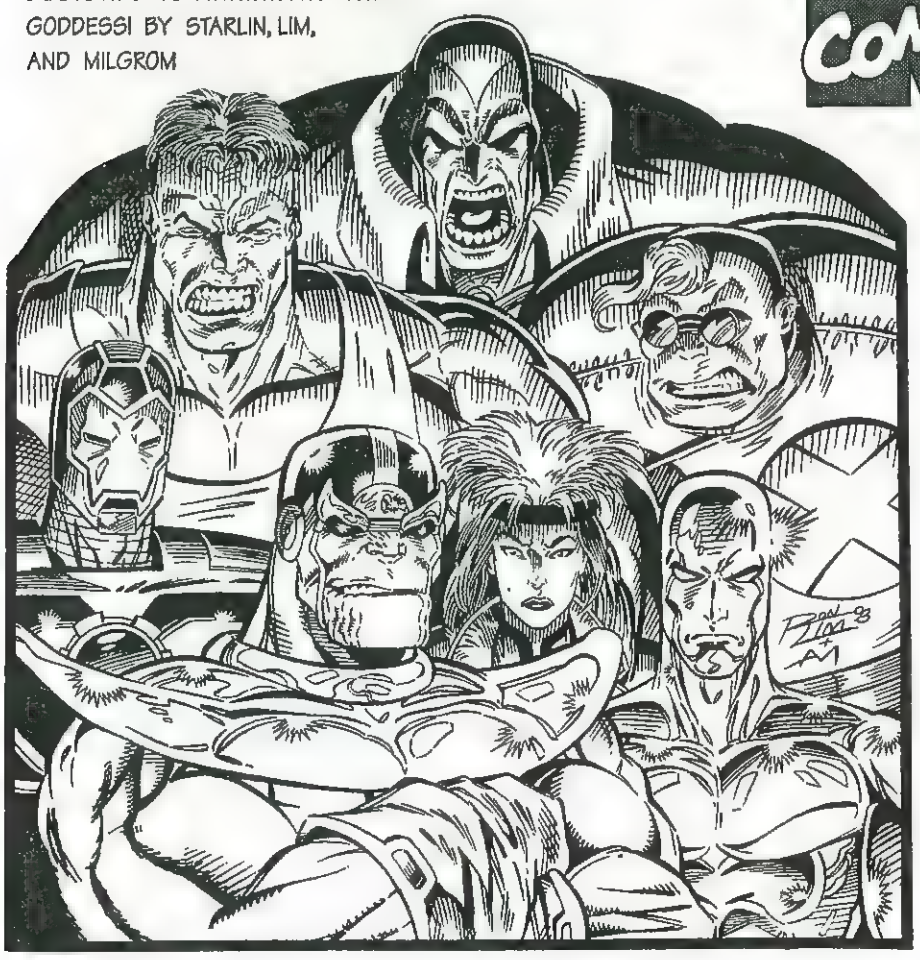
IT'S THE COST OF A REGULAR CALL FROM ANYWHERE IN THE UNITED STATES AND WON'T EXCEED 35 CENTS.

YOUR INSIDE CONNECTION AT MARVEL

INFINITY CRUSADE #4
MAKING ROUNDS WITH THE MAGUS!

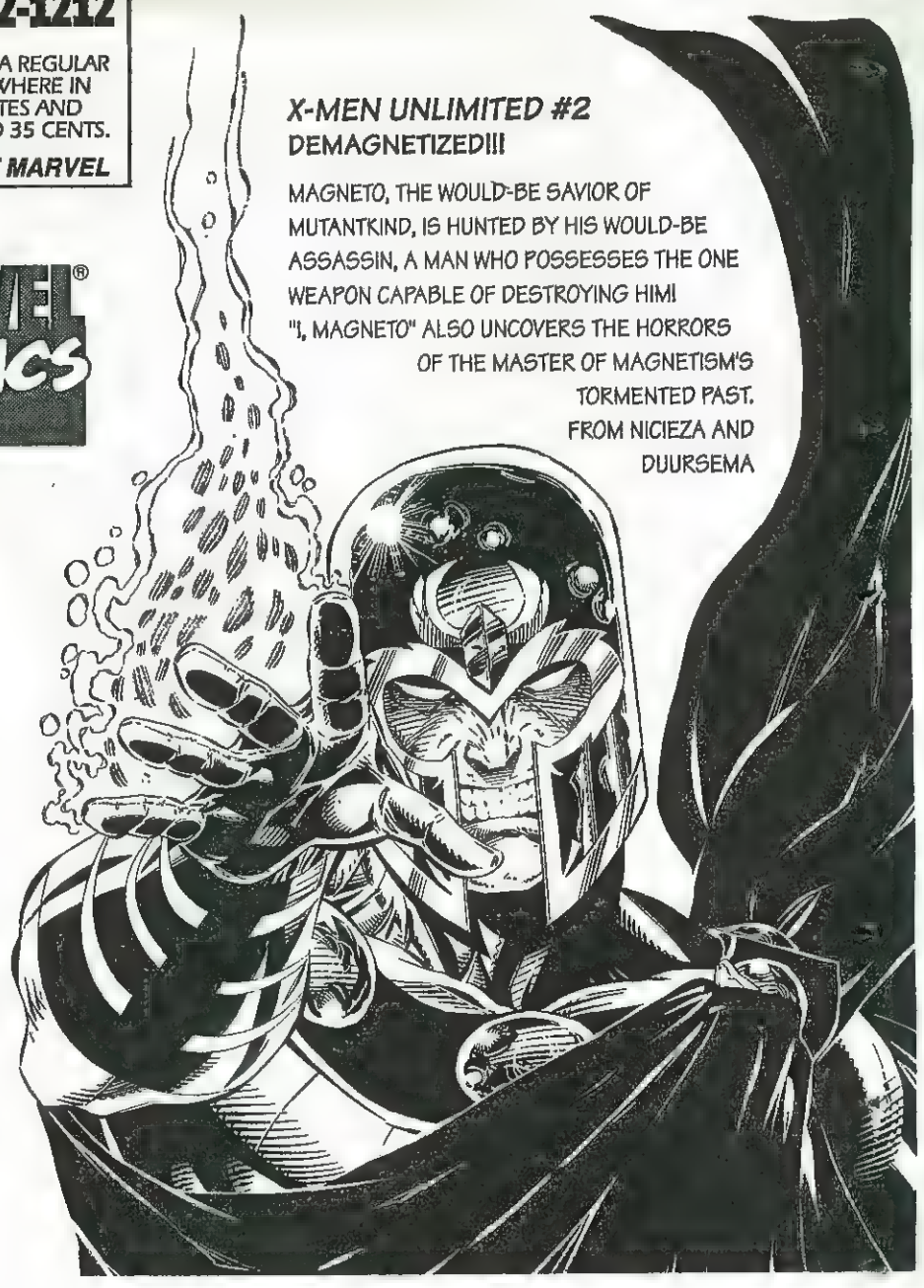
YOU KNOW THINGS HAVE GOTTEN WAY OUT OF CONTROL WHEN WARLOCK IS FORCED TO TRAVEL TO SOUL WORLD ACTUALLY SEEKING THE AID OF THE MAGUS!!! PLUS, THE SILVER SURFER SWITCHES SIDES AND THANOS TRANSFORMS HIM INTO A CUSTOM WEAPON DESIGNED TO ANNIHILATE THE GODDESS! BY STARLIN, LIM, AND MILGROM

MARVEL® COMICS



X-MEN UNLIMITED #2
DEMAGNETIZED!!!

MAGNETO, THE WOULD-BE SAVIOR OF MUTANTKIND, IS HUNTED BY HIS WOULD-BE ASSASSIN, A MAN WHO POSSESSES THE ONE WEAPON CAPABLE OF DESTROYING HIM! "I, MAGNETO" ALSO UNCOVERS THE HORRORS OF THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM'S TORMENTED PAST. FROM NICIEZA AND DUURSEMA



and readability. To that extent, we are eschewing all promotional gimmicks—no foil covers, trading cards, die-cut covers, chocolate sprinkles... the whole bunch. It must be what the audience is getting around to thinking they want, because it wasn't too long after I started making press statements to this effect that another company started putting out a lot of promotional literature saying they were interested in doing good stories with no gimmicks. When we say it, it's true...

There's not much of a marketing strategy here except that people can count on our books to be readable and entertaining. Establishing an identifiable quality for your books is difficult but crucial. I've been putting tags on letter columns like "Claypool Comics—They're Fun To Read." I really believe that's an honest representation of what we're doing.

We're a very economically run company. I keep joking with Ed that if we were run any more economically, we'd have to be run by the Amish. This was one of the splitting-off points that I had in my latter months at Harris; I was hired to put out some comics that would keep ***Creepy, Eerie***, and ***Vampirella*** in the public mind, but not to go overboard. When I was there, we had a very modest budget; we couldn't even get a full-page ad approved. Things have really changed since then. I don't dislike gimmicks or publicity, mind you, and I'm not putting anyone down, but I got into comics because I wasn't interested in stamps or trading cards or some such. Comics were interesting because they stories, and not just something to put in the spokes of your bike. That's the Claypool identity.

Are you enjoying editing as well as writing and drawing comics?

Oh yes. I'm an involved—others might say meddlesome—editor. If I think something's going off track, I'll tell the creators. I view that as a part of my job function; if I have a question about a story, then I assume that some percentage of the audience is going to have the same question. There's a school of thought out there that says you pick the right people and just let them do their job; I don't have any real problem with that philosophy of editing, but I've never yet hit the story that couldn't use a little more thought at one point or another. Or the artist who couldn't profit in some way from a thoughtful and concerned editor saying, "You know, this might actually work a little better if you used more blacks in the panel, or cut down on these huge eyes here." I must be weeding out the people who can't stand my editing style, because I'm not getting too many complaints. Of course, several of the people working for Claypool—Kurt, Peter, Jo Duffy— I've known for quite a while.

How did the Eclipse distribution deal come about?

When I started at Harris, we had a distribution deal with Dark Horse because it wasn't cost-effective for Harris to form its own sales and promotion department. Later on, it became cost-effective to do that, so they amicably parted ways with Dark Horse and now there's Harris Comics. It still seemed to me that, as an arrangement for a young comic book company, that sort of deal would be good. It struck me that Eclipse was small enough that we could be an important enough part of their production output that they would pay attention to us. If we went to a big company, we'd need a larger, more powerful number of books to make sure that our needs were attended to; in Eclipse's case we haven't had to worry about anything like that. I can't really say enough good things about the way Eclipse has been handling us so far; the day before the Chicago

YOU--GOT FANGS! REAL FANGS!!
GET AWAY FROM ME! LEMME GO!!
ooh, THREATEN US, WHY DON'TCHA, GUY?
TRENDY HAIRCUT. NICE SAFETY PINS. FASHIONABLY TOO-TIGHT T-SHIRT.
HE'LL DO! HE'LL DO VERY WELL!
OREVIEW!
™ &©1993 Claypool Comics

EARTHDAWN™

Look for Earthdawn flyer #3 this month. Combined with flyers #1 and #2 this free flyer will give you your first Earthdawn adventure. See Your local retailer for details and watch for Earthdawn in August!

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FASA CORPORATION

YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHO'S IN OUR OFFICE!
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? TIM BURTON HERE! RIGHT HERE!
I regret I must disappoint you. I had many names, but that is not one of them.
I have variously been known as Amorphous... Rem... Z.Z. Top... Lullabye Guy...
My family calls me DWEEB...
™ & © 1993 Claypool Comics

convention, cat yronwode spent about twelve hours turning out and helping lay out some text pages for the second issues of the Claypool books. I've also known Dean for quite some time, and cat as well—twelve or thirteen years now—and Dean and Ed Via go back even further than that.

This is the size we're going to stay for the foreseeable future—at least for the rest of this year. I think a lot of companies will be lucky if they get through this year without major financial difficulties. I'm assuming that a lot of these companies are better capitalized than we are, so it's more incumbent on us to not make disastrous decisions. We have some small impetus towards expansion, but I don't see us adding new comics for at least the next year. We'll also stay black and white; there are no definite plans to add color, because it can add thousands of dollars in expenses.

Are you working on anything other than Claypool's books?

No, Claypool is almost everything I'm doing right now; I do *very* occasional other projects, but nothing regular. I got asked to do a trading card for Topps, which I did—one of the Teenagents cards. They paid me well and offered me Joe Sinnott as an inker—and either one of those would have convinced me to do the job. Kurt Busiek also set up some trading card thing with Majestic, a company that's creating new characters for a new card series. Kurt and I have a long string of characters we hoped to submit to the Big Two when there was a Big Two. Otherwise, Claypool gets all my attention; there isn't much time left for anything else!

Last Week *CSN* featured reviews of *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #50, Rebel 1, The Golden Age #1, Mr. Lizard Annual #1, Aliens vs. Predator The Deadliest of Species #1, Mack Bolan The Executioner #1* and *Thunderstrike #1.*

Next Week *CSN* will feature the complete August Checklist.

COMIC SHOP NEWS

MISS A WEEK AND YOU MISS A LOT!

Have you seen anything in this issue of ***Comic Shop News*** that you can't live without? Make sure you don't miss it; clip this handy coupon and write down the things that you want your comics shop owner to be sure to get for you!

Name_____ Phone _____

I gotta have 'em! Please reserve for me the following items mentioned in ***Comic Shop News!***

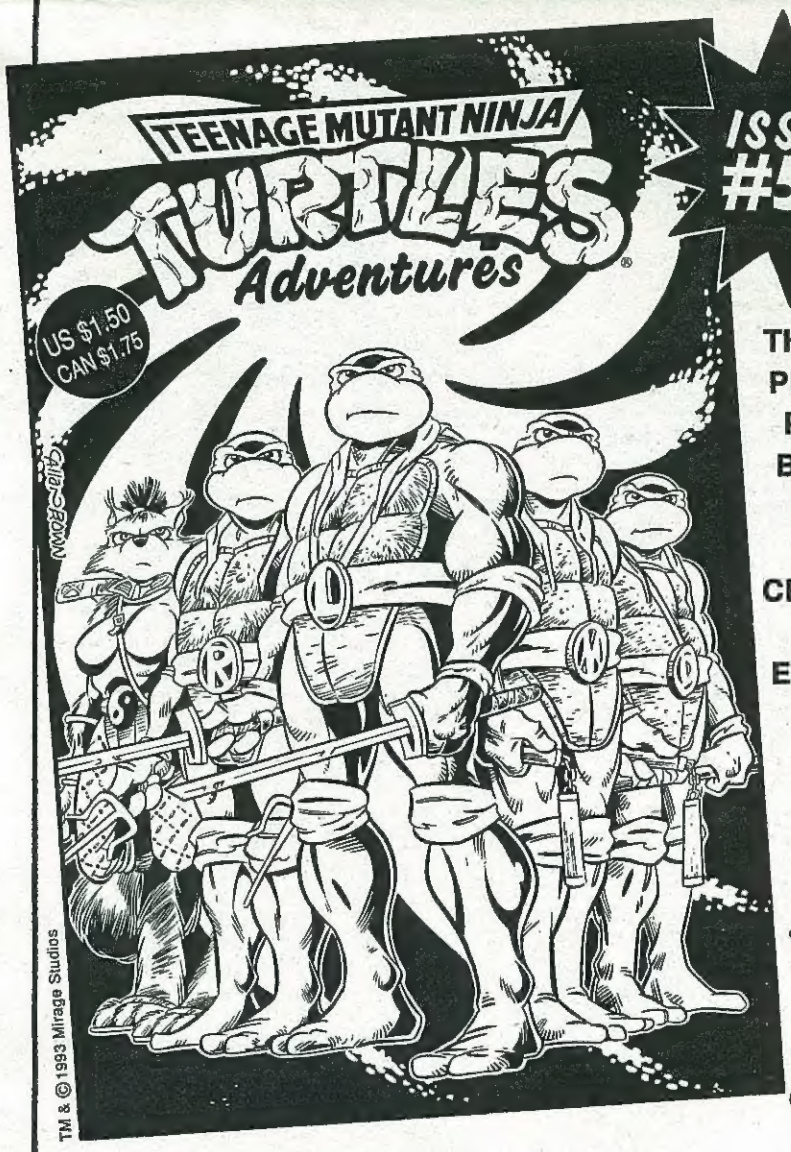
_____

_____

_____

Be sure to give this to your retailer. Do not send it to *CSN!* Your comics shop will make every effort to get the items you want; some items may require a down payment before your shop owner can get them for you; be sure to ask!

GOLD COLLECTOR'S EDITION

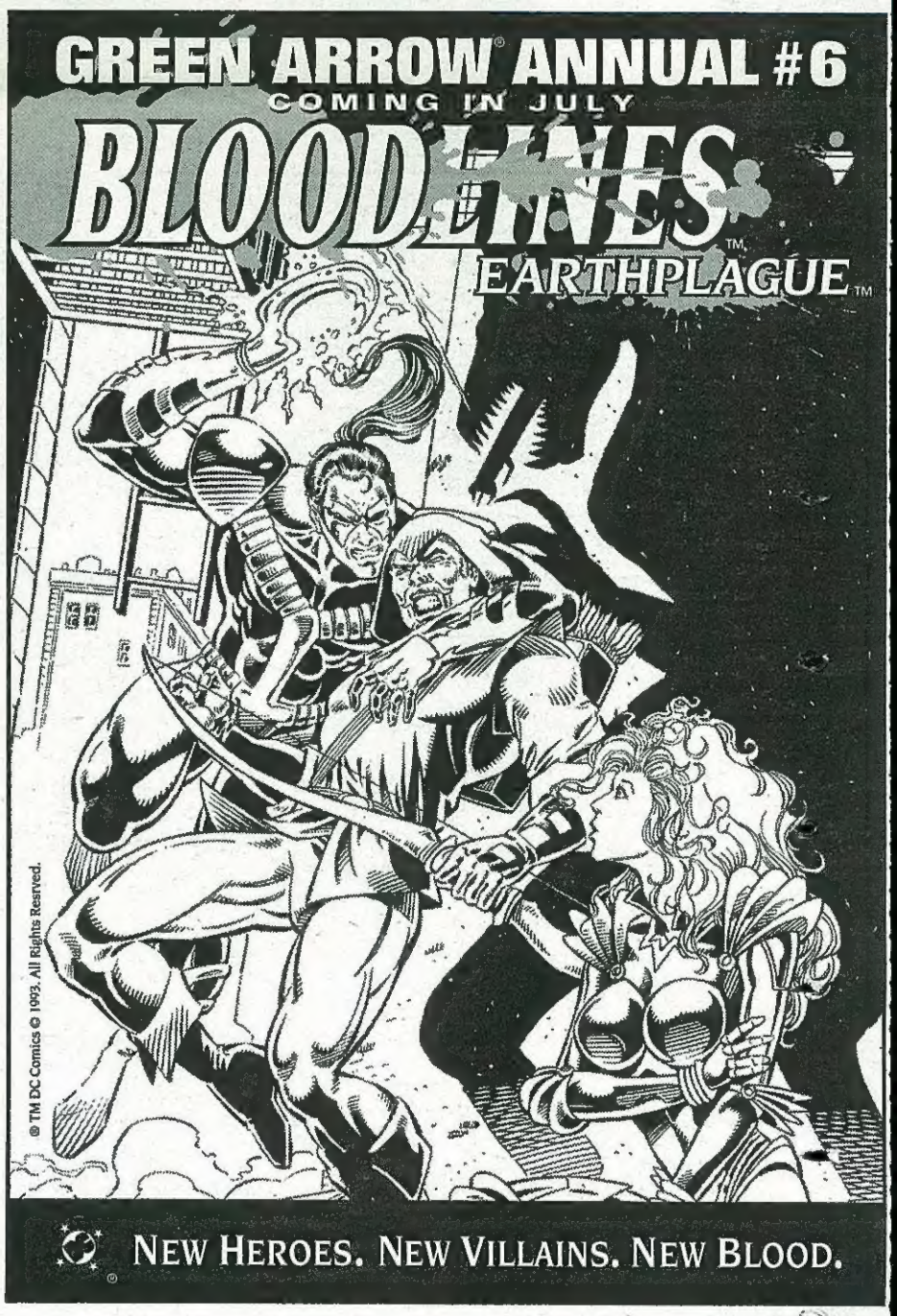


THRILLING PULL-OUT POSTER BY NONE OTHER THAN CREATORS KEVIN EASTMAN AND PETER LAIRD

•

SHIPS JULY 27, 1993 FROM *ARCHIE COMICS!*

YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY MISS THE METALLIC GOLD ON THE COVER!


GREEN ARROW® ANNUAL #6
COMING IN JULY
BLOOD LINES™
EARTHPLAGUE™
® TM DC Comics © 1993. All Rights Reserved.
NEW HEROES. NEW VILLAINS. NEW BLOOD.

MARVEL HOT PICKS

X-MEN CLASSIC #88!

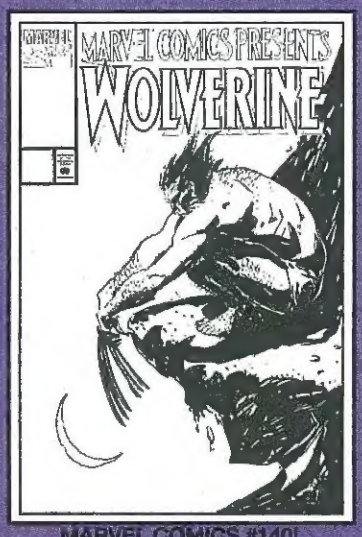
This vintage adventure, reprinted from UNCANNY X-MEN #184, is by the stellar Chris Claremont/John Romita Jr. creative team!

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #15!

Part 4 of the "Road to Vengeance" crossover introduces an all-new Blaze with a neon ink cover!

SILVER SURFER #85!

This "Infinity Crusade" crossover is polybagged to include the ultra-hip *Dirt* magazine and a free gift!

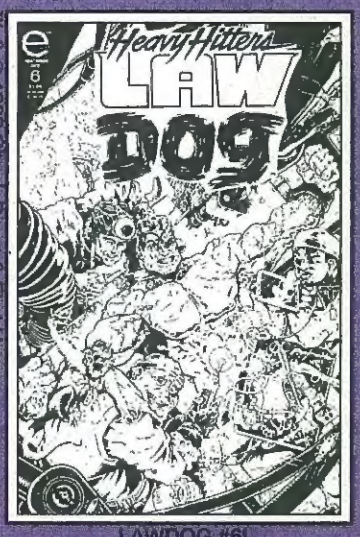


MARVEL COMICS #140!

When Wolverine rumbles in the jungle, his true captors reveal themselves!

THOR #467!

The Thunder God is madder than a hatter in this "Infinity Crusade" crossover!



LAWDOG #6!

PUNISHER fans, you gotta check out Chuck Dixon's action-packed "Heavy Hitter." Flint Henry's explosive artwork is gonna blow you away!

™ & © 1993 Chuck Dixon & Flint Henry

MARVEL COMICS

MARVEL COMICS SHIPPING THE WEEK OF AUGUST 31ST

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SUPER HEROES FROM THE MIND OF CLIVE BARKER

RAZORLINE

SUMMER 1993

SAINT SINNER

ELAINE LEE
MAX DOUGLAS

ECTOKID

LARRY WACHOWSKI
AND JAMES ROBINSON
STEVE SKROCE
BOB DVORAK

HOKUM & HEX

FRANK LOVECE
ANTHONY WILLIAMS
ANDY LANNING

HYPERKIND

TRISTAN
FRED BURKE
PARIS CULLINS
BOB PETRECCA

MARVEL COMICS

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